

Brush fire cancels SAV exercise for base department



SMOK'IN— Smoke billows from a fire that engulfed ten acres of Westover land during the A UTA in April. Within two hours the 10 reservist firefighters had the fire under control preventing it from spreading to the woods only yards away.

—photo by SSgt. Charlie Cangemi

Article and photo
by SSgt. Charlie Cangemi

Ten acres and a SAV exercise went up in smoke when Westover firefighters turned their hoses on a fast moving brush fire during April's staff assistance visit.

The firefighters were ready to respond to a simulated structural fire for SAV inspectors when they spotted smoke billowing in the northeast corner of the base.

Five trucks and 10 reservists responded to the blaze, which ignited when Blackhawk assault helicopters dropped smoke markers on the dry grass.

"The inspectors canceled the scheduled SAV exercise because they happened to be present when an actual fire broke out," said CMSgt. Lawrence Lose, fire chief. "They were very happy with how the reservists performed."

To fight the fire, SSgt. Dave Perry, SSgt. Russ Atkinson, and SSgt. Patrick Campbell assisted other vehicles by chasing flames in a yellow P-23 crash truck. Throwing thousand of gallons of water on the fire prevented it from spreading into the woods.

Other reservists walked along with hoses, dousing the flames and preventing them from spreading.

"If it spread to the woods then it would be a real mess," said Perry.

The fire was extinguished in less than two hours.

"It's rare that we get brush fires out there, but the land is really dry right now," said Lose.

439th AW Mozambique relief missions ... from page 1

dating his military travel.

The C-5 left Westover with two augmented crews as mission requirements called for nearly continuous flying over 10 days, shuttling cargo between continents. The crew used Ghana as their "stage" base swapping Westover crews as the C-5 came through midway between destinations. Maj. Douglas Gernhard and Maj. Stan Smith were the aircraft commanders for their respective crew. The first leg flew to Hoedspruit, South Africa to pick up cargo. Hoedspruit is approximately 100 miles from the Mozambique border. Once loaded, the C-5 returned to Ghana, switched crews and delivered cargo to RAF Mildenhall, northwest of London.

After another reload in Hoedspruit, the C-5 returned to Ghana. Lack of fuel in Ghana necessitated more fuel stops on the way home. The C-5 stopped at the Ascension Islands for fuel, but they also discovered a break in a hydraulic line. "MSgt. Steve Ross worked really hard to get us

back on the road in little more than 24 hours," said TSgt. David Adams, 439th AGS mechanic. In fact, Adams praised maintenance support throughout the mission, both from Westover staff and from Air Force personnel helping at each location.

After one more fuel stop at Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, Puerto Rico, the crew delivered their cargo of four H-60 rescue helicopters back to Moody AFB, in Georgia.

A tired, but satisfied crew returned to Westover on April 5. "Most guys will put up with more knowing you are helping people out. It is rewarding," said Gernhard, referring to spartan living conditions, very long days and the need for flexible schedules.

"These successful missions are a true testimony to our people's flexibility and training, and speaks highly of the day-to-day capability the Reserve brings to our nation," said Col. Martin M. Mazick, 439th AW commander. "I thank the employers and families of these crew members, for without their support, this capability would not exist."

Africa relief effort crews

Capt. Glenn T. Melia
Capt. Christopher T. Cortese
1st Lt. James C. Miller
2nd Lt. Travis M. Board
SMSgt. Garth Parker
MSgt. Daniel G. Hartling
MSgt. Henry M. Olearecek
MSgt. Lawrence A. Gawacki
TSgt. Christopher J. McCurdy
TSgt. Ronald F. Donofrio
TSgt. David M. Benson

Maj. Douglas R. Gernhard
Maj. Daniel W. Smith
Capt. William Gonzalez
1st Lt. David M. Capuano
TSgt. Scott Pashko
TSgt. Kenneth MacDougald
TSgt. David Benson
MSgt. Lawrence A. Garwacki
TSgt. Mark A. Pleva
TSgt. Thomas Budington
TSgt. David P. Adams

Maj. Stanford S. Smith
Capt. Kenneth A. Parsons
MSgt. David P. Jones
SSgt. Kevin P. Godbout
MSgt. Richard D. Bready
MSgt. Theodore J. Chaloux
TSgt. Michael T. Dunn
SSgt. Greg S. Levangie
TSgt. Richard W. Halla
MSgt. Steven E. Ross